

Members

Rep. Markt Lytle, Chair  
Rep. Dale Sturtz  
Rep. Richard Mangus  
Rep. Phyllis Pond  
Sen. Greg Server  
Sen. Harold Wheeler  
Sen. Allie Craycraft  
Sen. James Lewis



## NATURAL RESOURCES STUDY COMMITTEE

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Committee  
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### MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting Date:** August 4, 1999  
**Meeting Time:** 10:00 A.M.  
**Meeting Place:** Fort Harrison State Park, Garrison Building  
**Meeting City:** Indianapolis, Indiana  
**Meeting Number:** 1

**Members Present:** Rep. Markt Lytle, Chair; Rep. Dale Sturtz; Rep. Richard Mangus; Rep. Phyllis Pond; Sen. Harold Wheeler; Sen. Allie Craycraft; Sen. James Lewis.

**Members Absent:** Sen. Greg Server.

Rep. Markt Lytle, Chair of the Natural Resources Study Committee, called the meeting to order. After an introduction of Committee members, Rep. Lytle explained that the Committee was established by statute to do the following:

- (1) Examine laws relating to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and recommend, when necessary, legislative changes designed to better serve the citizens of Indiana.
- (2) Advise and assist the IDNR in programming its activities and in developing a long-range plan for land acquisition, capital improvement, and development of facilities.
- (3) Oversee the Indiana Water Resource Management Program.

In addition, the Legislative Council has assigned the following topics to the Committee to study during the 1999 interim:

- (1) flood plains and floodway regulations with respect to construction in Indiana;  
and
- (2) the need for a Forest Inventory Program in Indiana.

Rep. Lytle invited Committee members, representatives of the DNR, interested parties, and members of the public to offer additional topics for study. Other topics included:

1. The Preservation of Cemeteries.
2. Endangered Species Fund Line Item.
3. Historic Bridges.
4. Municipal Regulation of Swimming in Lake Michigan.
5. Fossil Removal from DNR Property.
6. Shooting Preserves.
7. Oil and Gas Environmental Fund and Orphan Equipment Salvage.
8. Boating Laws and Licenses.
9. Department of Indiana Heritage.
10. Local Ordinances That Affect Hunters and Trappers.
11. New Federal Wildlife Programs and Funding.
12. The State of Indiana Rivers and Lakes Relative to Fisheries and Outdoor Recreation.
13. Fees Associated with Participation in the Coal Mining Bond Pool.

**Oil and Gas Environmental Fund and Orphan Equipment Salvage.** Paul Ehret, Deputy Director of the DNR, explained that the Oil and Gas Environmental Fund is used to clean up orphaned or abandoned well sites. He noted that there are more abandoned sites than what the fund can handle. Additionally, there can be ownership issues or liens on abandoned property that can inhibit clean-up. Presently, the fund has a \$500,000 balance. There are a little under 1,000 abandoned wells in the state. Plugging an abandoned well can cost from several thousand to over \$10,000. Also, equipment is sometimes abandoned on the site. Money for the fund came from an annual fee of \$50 that was previously paid by certain operators. The fund also consists of revenue collected from fines and penalties. The expenses of the fund, however, would exceed the revenue if all sites were restored.

**Boating Laws and Licenses.** Rep. Pond explained that many boat dealers in her area would like to explain their concerns about boating laws and licenses.

**The Preservation of Cemeteries, Historic Bridges, and the Department of Indiana Heritage.** John Molitor, Historical Landmarks Foundation, emphasized the Foundation's interest in the preservation of cemeteries and historic bridges as well as its interest in examining the concept of the having a department of Indiana heritage.

**Local Ordinances Affecting Hunters and Trappers.** Dick Mercier, Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable, indicated that he would like to have reviewed a proposal from the last session that pertained to municipalities passing ordinances that affected hunters and trappers. Some municipalities and counties are passing ordinances that are in violation of state law, in his opinion. He noted that one municipality tried to pass a law that provided that people could own no more than two dogs. In addition, he noted that rarely a month goes by without a dog owner calling to complain that a bird dog or racoon hound has been shot by

a landowner. The Roundtable would like to develop some language that would alleviate the problem of people arbitrarily shooting dogs.

**Endangered Species, New Federal Wildlife Programs, and the State of Indiana Rivers.** Tim Maloney, Hoosier Environmental Council, expressed his interest in the endangered species fund line item. Additionally, Mr. Maloney mentioned new federal wildlife programs and funding that could affect wildlife programs in Indiana. He would be happy to work with interested parties and the DNR to ensure that the committee learns more about the federal programs. Secondly, he encouraged the committee to ask for a DNR report on their survey of the Wabash River and the new fishery. He would like the committee to discuss fisheries in general. He distributed an article from a Bloomington newspaper pertaining to the consumption of sports fish in Indiana and the public health risks associated with eating contaminated fish. He also distributed an editorial from a nationally known aquatic biologist about the health of Indiana's waterways in relation to fisheries and outdoor recreation. He stressed that toxic fish endanger Hoosier lives.

**Fees Associated with Participation in the Coal Mining Bond Pool.** Nat Noland, Indiana Coal Council, asked the Committee to consider the fees that participants pay into the Coal Mining Bond Pool. Currently, the fees are set by statute. He suggested that when the fund reaches certain levels or when operators have demonstrated a good history that the Department be given the authority by rule to reduce the fees to a lesser amount, subject to review by the federal Office of Surface Mining.

**Next Committee Meeting.** The next committee meeting was scheduled for 1:00 p.m., on Tuesday, August 17, and 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, August 18, at Brown County State Park. At this meeting, the Committee will consider the preservation of cemeteries as well as briefly discuss shooting preserves, among other agenda items.

Tentative upcoming meeting dates were September 1 and 2 or 8 and 9; October 6 and 7 or 13 and 14; October 20 and 21 or 27 and 28. The Committee plans to meet twice in August, once in September, and twice in October.

**Adjournment.** Rep Lytle adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m. Members then toured the State Park facilities.